

Navy Joins List of "Peconic Predators"

By Susan L. Jason

CALVERTON — Groundwater contamination at the Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP) in Calverton was addressed last week at a meeting in Riverhead between Pennsylvania-based Navy personnel and local Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) members.

After serving two years as community chairperson on the board, local homeowner Sherry Johnson stated, "enough is enough." That is exactly what she and other members of the RAB intend to tell Congressman Michael Forbes (D-Queque) today at 2 p.m. in Coram regarding the US Navy's important approach to de-contaminating the abandoned Grumman site.

"The Navy has known about all the contamination at the facility since 1986 and here it is the year 2000 and they still haven't gotten into any real cleanup activity," stated Johnson.

James L. Colter, the Navy's remedial project manager for the site, was accompanied to the meeting by Judithanne Hare, Naval Air Systems Command and Dave Brayack of Tetra Tech NUS, Inc. Brayack came prepared with color-coded diagrams in plain view, side view, and cross view indicating the extent or lack of groundwater contamination at Site #2, the former fire training area. Grumman used that site for decades to truck in fuel, oils and waste solvents, dump it in earth berms filled with water, set it ablaze and then extinguish it.

Chlorinated organic contaminants, commonly known as cleaning compounds or solvents, were noted in two

fence line, indicating the contamination had traveled farther south and registered between 10 and 100 times acceptable standards.

No matter which way you looked at it, cross-ways, side-ways or front-ways, cleaning fluids in the groundwater originating at Site #2 are moving toward the Peconic River, if not already there. The bad news gets worse when you discover that the data used to prepare the maps was collected between 1993 and 1997, according to Colter. Maps of BTEX contaminants, which are jet fuels and fuel additives along with Freon contamination were mapped and moving southeast in the groundwater based on the old data.

"It's a vicious circle," Johnson said. "Some temporary wells are dug, samples are taken for analysis, reams of reports are written and fancy, outdated mapping is prepared. Then finally after two years have gone by, we're told the data is too old and they have to go back to re-sample. Then we're told that even if the data wasn't too old, there is no money in the budget to remediate that site at that time and they would have to wait for concurrence from the regulators anyway."

Temporary wells that had been on the golf course are gone now and another Navy map indicated where they are proposing new temporary wells where the old ones used to be.

"To me it's another delaying tactic," Johnson said. "They're hoping that when they finally get to the point where they have to actually do something in the program, the stuff is all gone and they can't find it."

those findings.

"It's 14 years later and they are still investigating the same areas with little or no active remediation," states Mannhaupt.

In a NWIRP "Fact Sheet" dated June 1993, the Navy states that the northeast pond disposal area was used primarily for disposal of demolition debris, aircraft sections and junked aircraft assembly tools and paint cans. The sheet also indicates that heavy metals such as barium, copper and zinc were found in the soil and a facility investigation will further define the nature of the materials deposited at the site and any impacted groundwater. It further states, "Hazardous materials are not known to have been purposely disposed of in the area."

The word 'purposely' is troubling to Mannhaupt. At previous meetings Mannhaupt had requested information on what contamination had been found at the disposal area. She questioned whether any radioactive parts of planes or of the Lunar Module that was built on site could have been disposed of in the landfill. Colter indicated they had tested for contaminants they presume to be in the landfill, but "we don't go chasing ghosts." No further information was given.

Colter later stated that, "If in the future a property owner finds a spot of contamination that we missed, the law says the Navy must come back and address it." He referenced the Conservation Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) law that governs federal

Defense and the Navy are sitting back enjoying the show," stated Mannhaupt. Conspicuously absent from the scene, according to Mannhaupt, are the "head-line-hunting environmentalists" who are keeping a politically-safe distance.

After two years of quarterly meetings, the Navy finally presented Marsden Chen, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulator and head of the NYSDEC Superfund Unit with four work plans to do further investigations and commence remedial projects. Chen, who RAB members applaud for his professionalism and technical advice, promised to reply within three weeks.

Working with the Navy hasn't been easy. "It has been frustrating," stated Bill Gunther, "certainly at the beginning because we were being kind of spoon-fed by the Navy and they weren't very responsive." Mannhaupt is not that gentle in her assessment of the Navy's performance stating, "I feel there are members of the Department of the Navy who are condescending in their attitude towards our questions. They don't have to address any of our concerns and they know it. They only have to answer to the Department of Defense and the US Congress." RAB members have requested information on site-specific contamination, a prioritized list of remediation efforts, a chronology of contamination sampling results, and funding available, none of which have been forthcoming. The budget, according to Judithanne Hare, is always shifting.

Colter's statement, "We've done lim-

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The bank operates retail branches in Bridgehampton, East Hampton, Montauk, Southampton, Stony Brook Village, and Southold. The eighth branch office is scheduled to open in April, 2000 in Greenport. Currently the bank awaits OCC approval for its ninth branch location in Babylon. The Bridgehampton National Bank is locally directed and managed and is a member of the Independent Bankers Association of America, the National Bankers Association of New York State and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Bridgehampton National Bank is an Equal Housing Lender and an Equal Opportunity

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feelings and emotions regarding a person." "A long time ago, it was believed that diamonds protected people from harm

and actually brought luck and success to the wearer. Ancient Greeks thought diamonds were tears of the gods and the Romans believed diamonds were actual splinters from falling stars. Plato once described diamonds as living beings that embodied celestial spirits. It was also believed that Cupid's arrows were dipped in diamonds and held a magic equaled to no other.

Today, diamonds hold a deep fascination as the world's ultimate symbol of love and power. For some, the diamond represents an everlasting love while for others it is an expression of life's accomplishments. We are not only drawn to its natural beauty but we are also inspired by its history and magical associations.

"It seems diamonds have always brought some sort of luck around here," Bladykas said. "And what's a better time for that to happen than on Valentine's Day."

Navy

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"Seeing is believing," she stated. "The Navy wants to steer clear of being implicated in any problems with the Peconic, so limited surface-water testing is a bare-minimum response."

"We are going to request from Congressman Forbes that he review all the appropriations for the next five years for the Calverton clean-up project to make certain that funding is available and the process can be accelerated," Johnson stated.

"We've had to wait since October

to get an appointment with Forbes and we're not going to ask. We're going to demand it," Mannhaupt added. "The North Fork deserves no less."

Growth

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analysis of how the program helps local merchants. Information regarding financing and tax incentives would be included. The concept is to simply target downtown projects that would boost the business districts and strengthen existing communities. By rebuilding downtown areas, the county could help local governments spark new growth, he added.

Because quality of life also includes preservation efforts for open space and farmland, Gaffney has proposed the expansion of the STAR property tax cut program for farmers and to broaden the sales tax exemption for farmers as well. Farmers are facing real economic challenges and changes in regulations affect the way farms are managed, Gaffney said. By working with the farm community, he says, the county will be able to help agriculturists meet these challenges. A new source of funding will also be available for the future through the Common Sense Tax Stabilization Plan for Sewers and Environmental Protection which was approved by the voters in November. It will protect residents of our sewer districts from significant sewer tax increases and allow the county to invest in development rights for the future, Gaffney said.